

## Holbeck/Beeston

### 'Tithe to 2009' Boundary Trail

Type of Walk: Circular, on urban streets and parkland paths

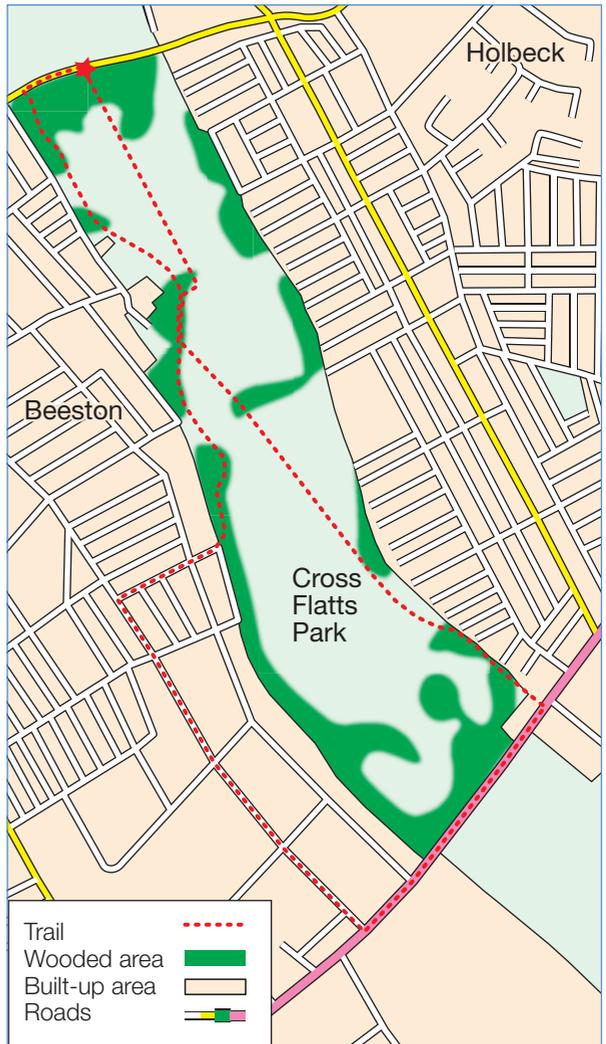
Distance: 1.5 miles

Starting Point: Beeston Road, Beeston (SE291 312)

Suitable for: Walking only  

#### Trail Summary:

From the main entrance to Cross Flatts Park on Beeston Road, in the historic township of Holbeck, this trail follows the tithe boundary with Beeston as it was laid out by the Tithe Commission in 1846-7. The township boundary is marked by the main footpath through Cross Flatts Park. The trail crosses from Holbeck to Beeston where this footpath emerges onto Dewsbury Road. Turning into Cross Flatts Grove, the trail follows roads and tracks depicted on the 1847 Beeston tithe map, meandering amongst densely packed housing, characteristic of both modern and historic Beeston. Finally, the trail re-enters Cross Flatts Park and Holbeck township at the bottom of Wooler Street, concluding where it began, by the park's main entrance on Beeston Road.



## Directions:

Enter Cross Flatts Park from Beeston Road, and join the wide path leading from the main gates. Follow this path directly ahead. Ignore all turn-offs to the left and right, passing two bowling greens and an area of flat grassland on your left-hand side.

In 1846, the path you are now walking and Cross Flatts Park to either side, lay in the township of Holbeck. At this time, the space here was not yet a public park. The main path led across land called Cross Flatts, which was owned by Benjamin and Joseph Rogers and kept as grass. Tithe plot 171, or Cross Flatts, was the grounds of a large dwelling house of the same name, which stood almost half-way down the modern park, on the right-hand side. This large house and its outbuilding complex also belonged to Benjamin and Joseph Rogers. The Holbeck tithe apportionment of 1846 mentions no other occupants, and thus it is likely that Benjamin and Joseph resided here.

The grounds of Cross Flatts became a public park in 1891, when the Low Moor Company, the last owners of the complex, sold the land to the Leeds Corporation for the sum of £12,965. The Low Moor Company had been owners of coal pits in the Beeston and Middleton areas since the mid-19th century. Originally there were 44 acres of land at Cross Flatts upon which the Leeds Corporation provided promenades, pagoda-style shelters, and recreation grounds in readiness for the park's grand opening on 11th July 1891.

**After the bowling greens and area of flat grassland, where the path splits ahead, turn right, keeping the playground on your left. After a short distance, the path splits again. Turn to your left, and stop here for a moment.**

Immediately to your right are old agricultural buildings and farm cottages, once associated with the large manor house (demolished) that stood behind them, and a little to their left. This manor was known locally as 'The Grange', but appears on the 1846 Holbeck tithe map, as 'Cross Flatts', being the house to which the surrounding parkland belonged. The manor house here was demolished in the 1970s, after being divided into flats that eventually became damp and uninhabitable. Modern flats now stand in its place.

It is not known when 'Cross Flatts' began to be referenced as 'The Grange' by local people. The name may hark back to a time long before the 19th century, being used in a popular, rather than an 'official', manner. A 'grange' was usually a term used to describe a farm complex serving a monastery

or abbey in the middle ages. There are certainly records of the Manor of Beeston being gifted to the Cistercian monks at Kirkstall Abbey in the 12th century. The remaining agricultural buildings here certainly predate the 1846 tithe map. Although the buildings are covered with concrete render and furnished with distinctly 19th-century windows, patches of absent render reveal an earlier stone structure, repeatedly patched and heavily altered with brick.

After the lands of Cross Flatts became a public park in 1891, the manor complex, later known as 'The Grange', passed to the Leeds Corporation. The buildings were separated from the park in order that the main house should serve as an orphanage, and subsequently, new focal points of a cast-iron bandstand, ornamental fountain, and aviary, were constructed here. The fountain and aviary stood immediately to your right, beside the gable-end of the remaining buildings associated with 'The Grange'. The bandstand stood opposite the fountain, a little to your left. The bandstand had a pagoda-style roof and was painted brightly. Many of today's older Beeston and Holbeck residents have fond memories of the bandstand and surrounding area.



The bandstand, 1899. (www.leodis.net - subject ID: 2002528-42286318, © Leeds Library & Information Service)

Betty, aged 83: *'I remember when I lived in Longroyd Crescent after the war. I was a only a youngster then, in my 20s. On Sunday evenings, when the weather was nice, we would walk up to Cross Flatts Park to listen to the bands. There were always bands playing on a Sunday night, and people would dance around the bandstand, young couples and neighbours...it was very busy. Everybody had a lovely time!'*

Albert, aged 86: *'I used to go to the Rex Cinema off Dewsbury Road to watch films. It opened in 1939, when I was a teenager! It's gone now, they pulled it down for houses. The last film on Sunday night ended about 9 o'clock, and if you'd taken a girl out, you'd walk up to Cross Flatts Park then and take her to the bandstand for the music.'*

A summer programme of free music for the community has recently been revived in Leeds' parks. You can once again hear bands ranging from brass to steel pans on most Sundays in Cross Flatts Park from July to August.

**Walk on ahead, and when the path splits again, take the main path, passing the tennis courts on your left-hand side. Walk straight ahead after the courts, ignoring any turn-offs, and follow the main path diagonally across the park.** 🌿

This main path through the grounds of Cross Flatts appears on the 1846 Holbeck tithe map. It is shown as a vehicular access track to the house associated with Cross Flatts and its outbuildings. The track stretches from Beeston Road down to 'The Dewsbury Road', as it is labelled on the Holbeck map. The course of this



The remaining outbuildings of 'Cross Flatts'

route remains completely unchanged today, and after passing the house on Cross Flatts (or 'The Grange'), the path you are walking still perfectly marks the tithe boundary between Holbeck and Beeston. As you pass the corner of the tennis courts, you begin to skirt the edge of the last land plot, on your left-hand side, to appear on the Holbeck tithe map. This arable land belonged to Benjamin and Joseph Rogers, the owners of Cross Flatts, and was known as 'Part of Shoulder of Mutton'. 'Shoulder of Mutton' is a common, archaic agricultural field name in England, and referred to the shape of the enclosed land, which resembled the cut of meat. From this point, everything to the left of the path you are walking, was considered to be in Holbeck township. Everything to the right was in Beeston. The land on your right consisted of three tithe plots belonging to Benjamin Rodgers



As you cross the park, the short-mown grass area is alive with mistle thrushes and blackbirds, using their keen senses of sight and hearing to hunt for worms and snails. Listen for the mistle thrush's rattling call, it is most unlike the more attractive sound of the better-known song thrush!



Near some whitebeam trees, in the grass to the left of the path, there is a fine fairy ring created by a fungus that spends most of its time under the soil. Periodically it sends up a ring of toadstools, which should not be eaten. The fairy ring is formed as nutrients in the centre are exhausted and the fungi move outward to new soil.

Esq., who was probably the same Rogers that partly owned Cross Flatts. The first of these plots, 'Top Pasture' was used by Rogers himself as arable land. The remaining two, 'Low Pasture' and 'Rape Close' were jointly let to John Young and William Dunhill as gardens. These three enclosures were the first plots appearing on the Beeston tithe map of 1847.

Despite the route of this path surviving unchanged today, it no longer holds the same significance as a local boundary marker. The whole of Cross Flatts Park is now thought of locally as being in Beeston, and there can be much popular discussion between residents of Beeston and Holbeck as to where the two areas meet and merge with others.

Olive, aged 82: *'I lived in Addington Street in the '50s, but we don't call that Beeston or Holbeck. That's 'Dewsbury Road'. I lived in the 'Dewsbury Road' area. At the end of my street was Hunslet Moor...and that's where Hunslet starts. Hunslet was the engineering district back then, where all the factories were, and there used to be a big feast on Hunslet Moor every year, in August. Addington Street isn't there anymore. It was demolished in the '70s and a new estate, Moor Crescent, was built.'*



Dewsbury Road from Moor Crescent Rd, c. 1964  
([www.leodis.net](http://www.leodis.net) - subject ID: 2003430\_64234561, © WYAS)

However, for the purpose of apportioning tithe rents in 1847, the official township boundary, marked by the access road to Cross Flatts, was followed.

**On reaching the corner of Cross Flatts Park, go through the gate onto Dewsbury Road, leaving behind the 19th-century vehicular track leading from Cross Flatts (The Grange). Turn right into Dewsbury Road, and cross over the tithe boundary into Beeston township. Stop here for a moment.**

Immediately to your left, across Dewsbury Road, is the road-mouth of Middleton Grove. Beside this road-mouth, on the right-hand side, stands The Dewsbury Road Social Club. Part of the signage of this building is missing, and reveals its previous use moulded into the concrete beneath the modern sign. The raised letters read: The Boston Café Ballroom.

The building's life as such, and as a local landmark, is recalled, for various reasons, by local people.



The Boston Cafe, Dewsbury Road

Margaret, aged 87: *'I remember the Boston Ballroom. It was a dancehall at the top of the road that used to lead to my uncle's farm. My family and I lived in a cottage on the farmland that my uncle rented from Middleton Colliery. Everybody knew it as 'Ward's Farm' but, I never knew why. My uncle's name wasn't Ward! In one of the stables there was a Jacob's Ladder. It led to a hayloft and I used to love to climb it. This was about 1926. I'd have been about five. At the house we had a big iron key to get in and we hung it on a nail outside so everybody could find it! People used to let themselves in if we weren't home. You wouldn't do that now... but back then you did. We'd nothing to steal anyway! We had no electricity or running water. We did our washing in a washhouse and drew water from a well. My mother cooked on a Primus stove and we had an outside toilet. It's hard to believe it was ever there now...it was a real farm, with horses and threshing machines. Now, it's an industrial estate.'*

Annie, aged 95: *'The railway from Middleton Pit ran at the bottom of the dirt road to Ward's Farm, the one where the Boston Ballroom used to be, off Dewsbury Road. It carried coal to Hunslet, where I lived. Hunslet was a lovely place in the '30s. If you looked after someone's baby, you took it for a walk around the lake on Hunslet Carr. There were swans and boats on the lake then, but they filled it in a long time ago, because of the rats it attracted. Hunslet Carr's still there, but it's just grass now.'*

It's hard to imagine, standing on the footpath of the modern Dewsbury Road, that as little as 80 years ago, the land on the opposite side of the street was open farmland. The only sign of industry cutting across the view of fields and trees, would have been the commercial railway from Middleton. Middleton Railway is the oldest continuously working steam railway in the world, and you can still ride the steam trains between stations at Moor Road, Hunslet, and Park Halt on the outskirts of Middleton Park, to this day. The railway was first granted powers by Act of Parliament in 1758 to build a gauge of 4ft 1in (1,245mm) to carry coal from Middleton Pits, owned by Charles Brandling, to Meadow Lane in Leeds. Brandling did not own all the land he wished to build on, so obtaining the act allowed

him to cross it, initially with wooden tracks, creating a horse-drawn wagon way. In 1807, these tracks were replaced by iron edge rails and in 1812, Middleton Railway became the first commercial line to use steam locomotives successfully. The track was converted to standard gauge, or 4ft 8 1/2 (1,435mm) in 1881 and continued to serve Middleton Pit until 1959, when the decline of the colliery saw the line made redundant. In June 1960, Middleton Railway became the first standard gauge railway to be taken over and operated by volunteers, with regular passenger services commencing in 1969. The line and its historic locomotives are now looked after by a charitable trust which organises pleasure rides and educational trips for school children. It also opens to visitors at weekends, on public holidays, and on Wednesdays in August. Today you cannot see the railway from Dewsbury Road. The land is now thoroughly industrialised as far as Middleton Woods, entirely blocking the view.🗝️

It is even harder to imagine around 150 years ago, the 1847 Beeston tithe map shows the land on both sides of Dewsbury Road here, to be entirely undeveloped. **As you continue to the right, down Dewsbury Road**, if you had walked this same route in the mid-19th century, you would have passed no buildings at all. On your left were two land plots belonging to Archibald Watson Goldie and Ralph Henry Brandling Esq., respectively. Goldie let his plot, known as 'Urchin Burbas and Road' to Benjamin Rogers, part owner of Cross Flatts. Brandling similarly let his plot, Rape Close, to Elizabeth Lockwood, and both plots were used as meadows. On your right, where Low Moor Terrace now stands was a further, previously mentioned portion of 'Rape Close' belonging to Benjamin Rogers Esq. Following this, **as you pass the end of Cross Flatts Avenue**, was the remainder of 'Urchin Burbas and Road' belonging to Archibald Watson Goldie and let to Benjamin Rogers. **Pause here a moment, at the end of Cross Flatts Avenue.**🌿



Victorian Villa at the end of Cross Flatts Avenue



The records of Middleton Colliery c.1753-1850 are held by West Yorkshire Archive Service.



Note the large white poplars inside Cross Flatts Park adjacent to Dewsbury Road. The main gate posts at this end of the park display the Leeds coat of arms, including a lamb and three owls. Parkland trees can offer good roosting sites for tawny owls and larger holes can be used for nesting.

Low Moor Terrace and Cross Flatts Avenue were not built until c.1893 and 1898 respectively. Prior to this, Beeston was a sleepy village whose main employers were local coal mines and agriculture. The late 19th and early 20th-century terraced houses and semi-detached villas so characteristic of the Beeston area today, were a product of the Industrial Revolution. Now interspersed with modern semis, some of these tall, brick villas, with ornate stone dressings, like the one at the end of Cross Flatts Avenue, still stand. These wide, and often originally tree-lined, avenues of large, semi-detached and through-terraced residences, were built to house the middleclass families of factory foremen and mill managers at healthy distances from their places of work, in Holbeck and Hunslet. Residing in the then semi-rural suburb of Beeston allowed them to escape the smoke and dust of industry when returning to their homes.

**After passing Cross Flatts Avenue, take the next right turn into Cross Flatts Grove.** Cross Flatts Grove appears on the 1847 tithe map of Beeston as a vehicular track, winding between 'Urchin Burbas and Road' on the right and the meadows of 'Burbas Well' and 'Nut Close', likewise belonging to Archibald Watson Goldie and let to Benjamin Rogers, on the left. The track was drawn onto the Beeston tithe map as a solid vehicular roadway to the point where the modern Cross Flatts Grove intersects Theodore Street. After this, the map shows the route became an unmade road, indicated by dotted lines, leading back to Beeston Road.

Houses were first erected in Cross Flatts Grove in the early 20th century. This was a further, middle class avenue that sprang up to house the growing number of professionals attracted to Beeston by the prosperity of local industry. Some of these early houses still stand among their modern replacements, and have carved wooden porches to the front, and ornate fascia boards to the gables. Large, stone bay windows have moulded bricks arranged in mock hood-moulds above them and similar mock roof trusses display an obvious intent to reflect the occupants' status in the buildings' exterior features.

**At the junction with Theodore Street, continue straight ahead on Cross Flatts Grove, noting further early 20th-century terraced housing with stone lintels, bays and carved porches, to your right. Take the next right into Wooler Grove.**

Wooler Grove does not appear on the Beeston tithe map of 1847. At this time the dirt track that was Cross Flatts Grove, cut across tithe plot 346, on which Wooler Grove was later built. This plot, known as Low Thornhill Heads, belonged to Archibald Watson Goldie and was let to Benjamin Rogers as arable.

**As you proceed down Wooler Grove**, to your left is a row of small, densely-packed, terraced houses. To your right are the gable ends of similar abodes, the first row of which (Cross Flatts Mount) are back-to-back. As the population of the industrial Leeds area grew, and factories expanded outwards from Hunslet and Holbeck towards Beeston, housing for ordinary workers sprang up in this previously outlying area. The terraces on Wooler Grove were erected in the 1930s, and originally consisted of a kitchen and living area downstairs, and two bedrooms upstairs. They had small yards to the front and shared outside toilets at the end of the row. Terraced houses were a quick and cheap way to accommodate working class families, but the back-to-back variety were considered insanitary, and banned in 1910. Despite the ban, desperate for space, Leeds' developers continued building back-to-backs until the 1920s. Cross Flatts Mount was legally erected c.1908. Many terraced houses were 'slum-cleared' in the 1970s 'improvement' programmes, and replaced with new accommodation. However, lots of older Beeston and Holbeck residents still recall growing up in the surrounding area, and the sense of community and support for local business the closely packed houses created.

Mavis, 82: *'We didn't have a lot of money growing up. Nobody did, but it didn't matter. We were happy. I went to Beeston School on Beeston Town Street in the 1930s, and everybody, all my friends, lived in the terraced houses round about. We had outside toilets and coal houses or coal holes then, but those are all gone now. They've pulled a lot of the back-to-backs down and built new houses. They pulled Beeston School down too, and built a new school where it used to be. I remember, I loved playing netball and hockey in the school yard. I was captain of both the teams and I was always in school plays! My grandmother used to tell me she went to the same school, but she had to pay three-pence a day back then, and she couldn't always afford to go.'*

Margaret, 83: *'My brother, sister and I were all born in our parents' corner shop in Cardinal Road in the '20s. It's called Cardinal Court now, and they've pulled down the terrace our shop was on to build new houses. My family lived above the shop, and my mum baked tea cakes and fruit pies to order. I used to deliver them to the neighbours for her. Mostly they'd give me a penny for my trouble, but I remember going to one house, when I was about ten, and the man of the house took the pies in. He gave me a sixpence! Of course, that was a fortune for me!'*

Joan, 72: 'I came to visit my sister in Huddersfield, from my home in Guernsey, in 1956. I met my husband while I was visiting and his mother lived in Holbeck. After we were married, she got us a house in Ingram Road. They've demolished the terrace now, and built new houses, but I always liked living there. Domestic Street was near by and it used to be full of shops. You didn't have to go into town at all. Everybody knew everybody, and you could just get everything you needed right there in Holbeck.'

**At the end of Wooler Grove, re-enter Cross Flatts Park through the gate ahead, and turn left, following the footpath up the side of the park.** 🌿

**Upon meeting with concrete steps, once leading to an ornate greenhouse, go to your left. (Routes for wheelchairs are present.) Continue past the next exit from the park, on your left, and pass a path leading off to your right.**



Site of the former greenhouse

As we saw at the beginning of the trail, Cross Flatts Park has been an important part of Beeston history for many centuries, but its prominence in the district was particularly highlighted on the night of the 14th March 1941. For the most part, Leeds escaped the worst of the Luftwaffe bombings during World War Two, but on the night in question, there was to be an exception to the general rule. In a sustained air-raid lasting until the early hours of the following morning, Beeston had more bombs dropped on it than any other district of Leeds. However, the area miraculously sustained the least amount of damage.

Thanks to the vast expanse of land covered by Cross Flatts Park, all but a single bomb fell relatively harmlessly on the grass here, with just one street, Flaxton Terrace, taking a direct hit. Tony Harrison, now a successful poet, hid in his cellar as a child in Beeston on the night of 14th March 1941. Harrison speculated in his 2005 poem 'Shrapnel', that the bombing of Cross Flatts Park may not have been a fortunate coincidence, but rather an act of heroism by the German bomber-pilot. Harrison grew up in Tempest Road, to the right side of the park as you are walking now, and attended Cross Flatts



As you re-enter the park, an ash tree before you has a number of bracket fungi protruding from the main trunk, 6 to 8m above the ground. They look like half dinner plates glued to the tree and unlike many fungi, are present all year round.

County Primary School, also over the wall to your right, which has since been replaced with a new building. It is said that indentations created by the bombs dropped that night can still be seen down the length of Cross Flatts Park if you look carefully, and that shrapnel may be found in the soil here.

**At the next junction of paths, turn left, and walk straight ahead.** 

**Pass ‘The Grange’ on your left and a pavilion on your right-hand side, ignoring smaller paths going off to the left and right. At the top of the park, exit onto Beeston Road and walk back to the main park gates to complete the walk. From the main park gates, look across the street to Holbeck Cemetery.**

Where the gateway of the cemetery now stands, with the war memorial beyond, the 1846 Holbeck tithe map shows two small buildings. Over your left shoulder, just inside Cross Flatts Park, a further building, also small, and rectangular in shape, is depicted.

The two buildings at the gateway to Holbeck Cemetery were owned by the Devises of the late George Banks and leased to William Leadley. The lands they occupied were used for grass, and referenced by the field names, Dove Cote Close and Near Bar Row Close. These names imply the buildings were associated with agriculture, but no mention of their specific usage is made in the Holbeck tithe apportionment. The land on which the two buildings stood was taken to create Holbeck Cemetery in 1857. The facility cost £7000 to construct and originally contained two lodges and two chapels. A single lodge remains, but is now in private hands.

A former Lord Mayor of Leeds, Henry Rowland Marsden, has a large memorial in the cemetery here, topped with a praying angel. Marsden was born in 1823 to poor parents in Holbeck, but emigrated to America in 1848, where he made his fortune in a successful career in mechanical engineering. Henry Marsden returned to Leeds in 1862, setting up a factory producing patent stone-crushing machinery to meet the demand for road building.



To your right, at the north-west corner of the games courts, are two ancient hawthorn trees. These may be remnants of a hedge running close to the access road to Cross Flatts that once marked the Beeston/Holbeck tithe boundary.



The avenues and lines of trees in Cross Flatts Park offer a good feeding habitat for bats, such as the common Pipistrelle which likes to roost in the roof-space of houses. Bats make good housemates and do not damage wires or woodwork. Watch out for them in the late evening as they twist and turn scooping up midges.



The trees lining the main path through the park are a mixture of ash and sycamore. By measuring the circumference of one of these ash trees and observing standard growth rates for the species, West Yorkshire Ecology estimate that they are around 90 years old, and were planted in 1919.

Marsden won many awards and medals for his engineering inventions, but donated most of his spare time and money to his public life. He joined the Liberal Party and in 1866, became councillor for Holbeck. By 1872, he was an Alderman, and finally became Mayor in 1873. Marsden also served as a magistrate for six years. A marble statue of Marsden, by local sculptor John Throp, has pride of place on Woodhouse Moor near Leeds City Centre. This was funded by public subscription, which raised £1000, following Marsden's sudden death on 19th January 1876. **DETOUR** ➤

The building that stood over your left shoulder in 1846, just inside the gates of Cross Flatts Park, belonged to Benjamin and Joseph Rogers. No mention of its use is made in the Holbeck tithe apportionment, but it was probably associated with the lands of Cross Flatts, as a small 'hook' appears on the tithe map linking the building to its surrounding plot. It is possible, due to this small building's location beside the main track leading to the house later known as 'The Grange', that it may have been a gatehouse. Large houses often possessed small gatehouses to filter visitors and manage deliveries. It is likely that the building here became surplus to requirements and was thus demolished when Cross Flatts became a public park in 1891.



Plan of Holbeck, 1846 (Leeds, RD/RT 112)

**DETOUR** ➤ A panel inside the cemetery gate will lead you among other interesting graves of prominent former residents of Beeston and Holbeck, including the family of poet Tony Harrison. It is well worth a small detour at the end of the trail if you have time.